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RAIL TRAVEL newsletter

25¢

VOL. 3 NO. 2
JANUARY 15, 1973
#52

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

ON THE COVER: Why has no American postage stamp honored Amtrak? Why did no stamp even commemorate the centennial of the transcontinental railroad in 1969? The answers to such questions will point up the state of enthusiasm for rail travel in official Washington circles. Our fanciful stamp here was created from one originally appearing in 1869, the first to show a steam locomotive.

LETTERS

I read your article (Dec. 18) about the Office of Management and Budget killing the new Amtrak routes. What power does this body possess? As a Canadian I find this hard to understand because in this country once Parliament passes an Act it is law and no one can halt it.

Concerning delivery date of the Dec. 4-18 double issue: it arrived in my mail box January 15. I have no idea when it was mailed. (Ed. note: the issue was mailed January 10.) However, it normally takes three or four days to get RTN when it is sent first class.

I enjoy your magazine. Keep up the good work.

David Osborne

Fort Churchill, Manitoba, Canada

Really look forward to getting your newsletter; passenger trains are few and far between over here--in fact the only one we had (a tourist line on Maui) went broke a while ago.

Lord knows what Nixon and OMB will do to Amtrak next fiscal year, but let's hope that common sense and the wishes of the electorate, as expressed thru Congress, will prevail.

Chris D. Cameron

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Hawaii

I enjoyed Paul Rayton's Canadian travels (the Dec. double issue arrived Jan. 15), though it is apparent that some of his train-riding habits are at odds with mine. For instance, if I don't feel like getting up, I'd never strain myself just to take advantage of a free continental breakfast.

He made one error that might warrant correction, in that he equates a duplex roomette with American Sleepercoaches or Slumbercoaches. They are in no way similar. The original Budd-built Sleepercoaches had 24 single rooms and 8 double rooms. Later, New York Central converted some 22 roomette Budd-built cars to Sleepercoaches but were unable to pack quite as many rooms into them. The interior of a Sleepercoach is almost entirely fiberglass, with no carpeting, rather hard and spartan seats, very limited luggage space and unique split beds, with half folding out of one wall and the other half from the opposite side. The bedding is rolled up at one end for the passenger to uncoil, and the rather thin mattress has no springs under it. This arrangement provided minimal, cramped sleeping accommodations with very narrow beds, but are considered by many passengers worth the price as compared to sitting up all night in a coach. On the other hand, duplex roomettes are outfitted just as nicely as standard roomettes, but take up less space because of their staggered vertical design. Instead of the bed folding out of the wall, the bed slides out horizontally on roller bearings.

The only accommodation I've never experienced was Burlington's "Chambrette," last used on the TEXAS ZEPHYR. I have no idea how it was laid out.

George G. Weiss

Augusta, Georgia

"Rail Travel Canada" was in my opinion one of the best articles in a long while (and non-Amtrak too). It was a welcome change from the hodge-podge life we lead south of the border. Keep Mr. Rayton coming with more!

John Tesner

Campbell, Ohio

For the third consecutive time I commenced the new year on a passenger train--what better way is there? On Jan. 1 I set out from Philadelphia for southwestern Ohio by rail. Because my final destination of Wilmington is within an hour's drive of Cincinnati, Dayton or Columbus, I formerly traveled directly from North Philadelphia to either of the latter two cities on the NATIONAL LIMITED and its predecessor, the SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS. However, since Amtrak rescheduled this run so the NATIONAL hits Columbus, Dayton and Richmond at impossible hours, it has been necessary for me to switch over to the GEORGE WASHINGTON/JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY. This, of course, necessitates trekking down to the Capitol either on the connecting METROLINER or on an earlier convantional train.

In Washington, a long line formed for what the train indicator identified as the GEORGE WASHINGTON. Yet despite the considerable increase in patronage, Amtrak trains 50-51 have not improved substantially over previous C&O standards. Most equipment had not been refurbished and was in truly wretched condition. Many cars were overheated, including my aptly named SCL Pullman, "Tampa," which was the "regular car" according to the apologetic C&O porter who informed me that he had turned the heat off but feared that "Tampa" was suffering a steam leak that could not be repaired.

My roomette (#2) was one of the dreariest that I have ever ridden in. Paint was literally peeling off the walls and the seat's faded upholstery was so severely tattered that a huge chunk of cotton was exposed.

Amtrak claims that the WASHINGTON/RILEY is one of their biggest losers, yet they continue to place the worst equipment on this route. Still, the coaches were packed and the sleeper sold out--but for how long with this type of service?

Every time I ride this train I have a bad experience, but it is always redeemed as we inch our way across the great Ohio River. Looking out the window of our "Blue Ridge Club" dining car I spotted what is to me one of the loveliest vistas in the world--the nineteen-thirty-ish elegance of a symmetrical Cincinnati skyline, shimmering brilliantly in the foreboding darkness of a brisk Midwestern morning. Aglow in colorful illumination, the Queen City seems to possess an almost mystical quality before dawn that is best appreciated from the unique vantage of an Amtrak train. I think it is a pity that so few Americans are aware of the contemplative serenity that one can experience traveling by train.

We alight--not to the glorious Union Terminal but to Amtrak's new "River Road Station." How the mighty have fallen, indeed! This passenger facility, if it can

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Rail Travel Newsletter, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Whole No. 52), January 15, 1973.
Published twice monthly, on the first and third Mondays, by Message Media, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley, California 94709. Subscription $6.00 per year; single copy 25¢. STAFF: James Russell, Editor; Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large; Doug Ellis, Staff Photographer.

be so termed, is a McDonald's Hamburger stand--minus the hamburgers. There is no public transportation to this cinderblock paradise, and it is impossible to walk (Route 50 literally looms above) due to the highways. Sometimes I wonder if Amtrak really intends to stay in the long-haul biz. Only time will tell.

Christopher H. Anderson

Wilmington, Ohio

Ever since the PANAMA LIMITED derailed near Tuscola, Illinois in early December, the train has had an almost negative on-time record. Each time I've observed the train, it has arrived in Chicago somewhere between noon and 4pm (it's carded in at 9:30am). Much of the time the train is not even pulled into Union Station for loading until well past its 6:10 scheduled departure time, and it has been as late as three hours leaving. If service like this doesn't kill the Chicago-New Orleans (and scheduled intermediate stops) trade, nothing will.

Good luck with RTN in '73. I'll be with you all the way.

Roy F. Arpan

Evanston, Illinois

GUEST EDITORIAL

by John A. Mills

(Ed. note: Mr. Mills is spearheading the citizen movement to re-establish passenger train service in the state of Arkansas.)

A Supplemental Appropriation Bill which included $9.1 million for Amtrak was made law by President Nixon's signature on October 31, 1972. Of this, $4.1 million was to re-establish rail passenger service to Mexico on a route which would again provide service to Arkansas, still the only Southern state without any rail passenger service since Amtrak took over.

After two years of efforts, the entire state of Arkansas was looking forward to resumption of service. Many felt that Mr. Nixon's signing of this bill was somewhat instrumental in his carrying Arkansas in the November election, a first for a Republican Presidential Candidate in 100 years.

Much to the dismay of the state's population, we are now advised that the Office of Management and Budget has "permanently impounded" these funds. Others are questioning, "Is this our reply from President Nixon to our vote of confidence?" I do not believe it is, and fully understand his desire to keep down government spending.

However, in view of the Federal funds to subsidize other means of transportation, Amtrak has been grossly underfunded from its beginning. In the wake of the current and future energy crisis, in the face of the pollution caused by the auto, bus, and airplane, when compared to trains, and in consideration of the ever-increasing auto, bus and airliner death toll, Amtrak would seem to be our best investment in order to counteract these trends. Air travel becomes riskier every day, and much less convenient due to searching of passengers to prevent skyjacking, and its costs continue to rise. This $9.1 million amounts to less than four cents per capita and is infinitesimal in comparison to our total Federal budget.

Arkansans are deeply hurt and frustrated at this plan to continue to exile us from a so-called National Railroad Passenger System. The nation's 200th birthday

coming up in 1976 will result in many thousands of foreign visitors seeking to see the beauty of America, only to find that one of the most scenic states cannot be reached by rail. Most of these visitors will come from countries where rail travel is the most convenient and popular means of travel. Unless Amtrak receives a more reasonable share of government funds for a balanced transportation system, and Arkansas is provided with much needed rail passenger service, not only will our visitors suffer, but the nation as a whole will not be able to reap the benefits of modern rail passenger service.

WHITE HOUSE PLANS TO BUDGET AMTRAK $93 MILLION

With the official announcement Jan. 29 of the Federal budget for the fiscal year 1974, beginning next July, the White House indicated that Amtrak's share would be $93 million, higher than earlier pessimistic estimates but lower than Amtrak's request for something over $100 million to cover projected deficits for Fiscal 1974. The $93 million figure would require the dropping of several long-distance passenger routes, presumably among those named in our last issue. Congress must still approve the budget, and can alter the White House-proposed figures, but it seems quite likely that this year any total budget significantly higher than that recommended will be vetoed, and if passed again over the President's veto, will suffer impounding of funds by the Office of Management and Budget. A court test is pending on the legality of OMB's impounding of funds,in a Missouri case in which highway building funds were held back.

Meanwhile the $9.1 million supplemental appropriation referred to in an adjoining editorial remains permanently frozen. As reported in our last issue, OMB has indicated that a half-million of it is likely to be released sometime after July 1 to start up train service in California's San Joaquin Valley.

Congressman Ray Thornton of Arkansas called OMB's permanent impounding "incredible and inexcusable," while Senator Wilbur D. Mills expressed "disappointment" at OMB's action. All sources are in agreement that a major fight is brewing between Congress and the White House over the various budget cuts.

THE MEXICAN JUMPING BEAN JUMPS AGAIN

Amtrak's long-awaited train to Mexico, unofficially dubbed the "Mexican Jumping Bean" because of the numerous changes in route during its planning, finally was to get underway Jan. 27. The Jan. 20 date reported in our last issue was changed at almost the last minute, and the route altered. The train, called the INTER-AMERICAN, and numbered #21 southbound and #22 northbound, was finally planned to run tri-weekly between Fort Worth and Laredo, Texas, as a coach-only train with dining car service. But there was little enthusiasm expressed over the service (see detailed analysis along with train schedule elsewhere in this issue). Earlier laid out as an offshoot of the TEXAS CHIEF, long layovers are required to connect with that train (see other article). For travelers to Mexico using the SUNSET LIMITED, connections can be made either eastbound or westbound two days a week with layovers of 5-10 hours in San Antonio. Returning from Mexico, one can connect tri-weekly with the westbound SUNSET with a 13-hour wait, or eastbound two days a week with an 18-hour wait. Connections with Mexico's AZTEC EAGLE are good, but connections within the U.S. leave a good deal to be desired.

Amtrak released this table of on-time performance on Jan. 24.

AMTRAK ON-TIME PERFORMANCE (FIVE-MINUTE STANDARD) BY RAILROAD AND TYPE OF ROUTE

	JAN 1972	FEB 1972	MAR 1972	APR 1972	MAY 1972	JUNE 1972	JULY 1972	AUG 1972	SEP 1972	OCT 1972	NOV 1972	DEC 1972
ATSF	86.1	95.0	96.3	92.7	88.1	79.9	79.9	79.0	83.0	84.8	83.0	71.6
BN	59.8	71.1	66.4	79.9	79.4	73.5	73.5	67.9	79.9	82.3	80.6	53.9
C&O/B&O	78.6	69.0	87.6	84.5	81.6	69.9	69.9	48.4	89.9	75.3	81.6	66.1
Ill. C. Gulf	55.2	61.0	64.9	68.4	66.1	57.6	64.5	63.7	61.7	60.5	33.8	10.9
L&N	41.1	60.7	52.9	41.1	48.4	53.3	53.3	45.2	50.0	46.8	16.7	12.9
MILW.	88.9	88.0	90.6	91.1	87.6	85.7	85.7	84.3	89.6	89.0	90.5	80.8
MO. PAC.	60.7	85.7	72.9	66.1	46.8	56.7	56.7	50.0	51.7	69.4	43.3	41.9
PENN CEN.	83.9	80.6	88.7	83.1	85.7	72.6	68.1	77.8	75.6	80.9	74.2	69.2
RF&P	74.1	83.5	76.4	69.4	81.7	56.8	56.8	65.6	78.5	66.1	70.8	62.4
SCL	71.2	82.3	78.1	66.2	78.6	67.3	67.3	77.1	84.5	79.8	72.2	59.2
SP	70.4	87.0	83.1	79.8	73.7	60.3	60.3	60.9	56.9	55.5	71.4	41.0
UP	96.0	96.4	93.3	100.0	100.0	83.3	83.3	87.1	94.7	81.5	56.0	55.6
METROLINERS	84.0	81.6	89.3	76.0	81.5	63.1	55.9	83.2	72.6	85.6	69.3	69.3
CORRIDOR	86.6	86.3	87.6	85.6	86.7	80.2	79.4	80.7	83.1	85.3	80.8	71.8
LONG DISTANCE	49.5	63.6	74.0	62.5	73.3	51.4	44.5	40.2	50.4	55.6	50.4	32.5
ALL AMTRAK	77.4	80.3	84.6	79.4	82.7	72.3	67.9	72.4	74.6	79.0	72.8	62.8
NUMBER OPERATED	5,474	5,047	5,651	5,263	6,019	5,329	5,563	5,747	5,450	5,816	5,651	5,830

Mixed Train of Thoughts

THE LARK lives! Well, for one day. Inadvertently. Seems the COAST STARLIGHT that left Seattle Jan. 16 with 13 cars ran into a few problems--in fact too numerous to mention them all, but mainly flooded tracks in the upper Sacramento Valley due to torrential rains. At Tehama the train was detoured over the SP's freight-only East Valley tracks to Roseville and thence onward. It arrived Oakland 12hrs 30mins late and passengers to the south found themselves getting a second free night's accommodation on what proved to be an overnight train to Los Angeles. L.A. arrival was 14hrs late, or a day later than intended. And the railroad didn't fall apart..... NEWS LEAK from Amtrak tells us that Truckee and Martinez, Calif., are to be added as stops for the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR about the end of April..... FEDERAL JUDGE on Jan. 15 extended to March 23 the court's deadline on termination of the bankrupt Central of New Jersey's commuter service..... LOS ANGELES County Board of Supervisors is looking into the legalities of compelling railroads operating in the county to lease their facilities for rail rapid transit service. Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Agency is planning a series of public hearings in the L.A. area on its plan for stringent gasoline rationing during summer months. The hearings start March 5 in L.A..... CONGRESS IS working on a bill that would require Senate confirmation of the man chosen by the President for head of the Office of Management and Budget. For background material on OMB, read the L.A. Times article of Dec. 26 entitled "OMB: Washington's Most Feared and Powerful Agency"..... * * *

FLYING SCOTSMAN, in storage near Stockton, CA for some time, was loaded aboard a ship at Oakland this month for return to England. There are rumors that the famous train has been sold by bankrupt Alan Pegler to a new owner..... SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR never made it thru to San Francisco on Jan. 16 since a freight derailed at Cisco on Donner Pass. The 136 passengers were bused on from Sparks, Nev..... FIRST AMTRAK ad in Bay Area newspapers since last summer appeared Jan. 18. It was the familiar "See a little more along the way" ad with the cow looking into the parlor car window. Ad gave schedules of the two Amtrak trains that run in these parts..... SNOW TRAIN from Boston, a one-day excursion Feb. 24 is sponsored by the Massachusetts Bay Railroad Enthusiasts (Box 136, Ward Hill, MA 01830) and runs thru the scenery to North Bennington, VT..... DEMOLITION CANE to the old Union Electric Terminal building in Sacramento this month. In recent years it was a food store, but once served the Sacramento Northern and the Central California Traction Co..... LAST WEEKEND of the old year saw Nashville Union Station full of passengers diverted from the airports, where flights had been cancelled due to bad weather. But the trusty trains went thru, and Amtrak's revenues soared a little..... "I DENY that Amtrak has 'renaissanced' our passenger service," said Southern Railway President W. Graham Claytor, Jr., this month in response to a question by Washington Star-News writer Stephen Aug that Amtrak's operations may have had something to do with the surprising jump in SR's passenger counts and revenue the third quarter of last year. He couldn't figure out the reason for the increasing usage of his railroad..... HEAVY RAINS created the worst flooding in memory in the San Francisco area in mid-January, creating havoc with automobile traffic. But BART just kept running with no particular problems. BART ridership (during commuter hours) hit a new high Jan. 30, the day after opening of the R line. And BART's chief engineer resigned in a surprise move late this month, complaining of politically-inspired negative reactions to BART that have lately been coming largely from people on portions of the system not yet in operation but paying taxes for it nonetheless..... PROJECTED MAILING date of this issue of RTN is February 2. If we don't make that date it'll be February 5 for sure.....

Amtrak's Mexican Train

by Alfred E. Ehm

Amtrak's newest service--unofficially known as "the new Mexican train" and officially as the INTER-AMERICAN--was planned to be in operation by mid-October, was then postponed to late December, and was finally announced to be running on January 20 from Temple, Texas, south. This was still earlier than expected because shortly after the announcement of December 14 that the new TEXAS EAGLE from St. Louis to Little Rock, Texarkana, Dallas, Waco, and San Antonio, would remain on MP rails thru East Texas (a decision received by the city of Dallas with some indignation) came the bad news that Amtrak's special appropriation of $9.1 million had been frozen by the Presidents's Office of Management and Budget and that service was therefore delayed pending release of the funds. Since the new EAGLE had taken the place of the originally planned off-shoot from the TEXAS CHIEF in Temple south to the border, hope that the new service would be in operation soon waned considerably.

On December 30, however, the press reported unexpectedly that a compromise involving the originally planned connection off the TEXAS CHIEF was again under consideration. The reason was reportedly the necessity to reexamine the decision to bypass Dallas and secondly the lack of money required to reinstate the service thru Arkansas. Commencement of the new service was first reported on January 6 by the Austin Statesman and was confirmed on January 10 by the San Antonio Express, which named Amtrak's Edwin Edel as the source. At about the same time Amtrak agencies in Texas received preliminary schedule and tariff information. The first train with direct cars to Laredo was to leave Chicago on January 19.

The preliminary timecard was as follows:

#25		#26
2:45 pm	Temple	3:43 pm
5:45 pm	Austin	12:05 pm
7:55 pm	San Antonio	9:50 am
11:55 pm	Laredo	6:00 am
6:25 pm	Nuevo Laredo	6:25 am

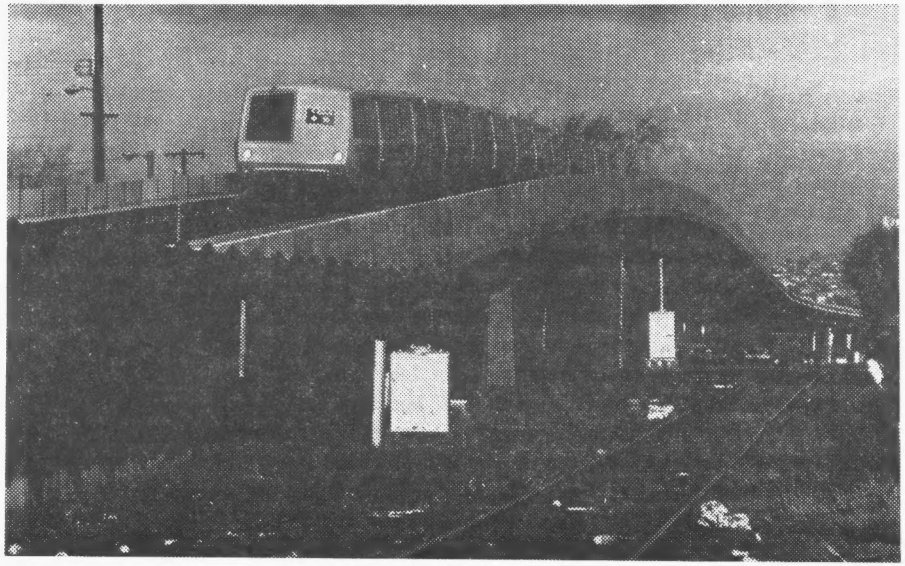
No southbound connection with the Mexican National's AZTEC EAGLE was provided, but it was intended that the northbound Amtrak train would be held if the connecting train arrived early, as it often does.

On January 10 three officials from Amtrak's Chicago office arrived to assist the local service manager in setting up ticket agencies in Austin and Laredo and in providing for some makeshift platforms in Austin, San Antonio, and Laredo, so that passengers would not have to clamber aboard ankle-deep in mud or sharp-edged ballast. Arrangements were worked out with San Antonio Transit Company for a special bus to carry passengers from the SP-Amtrak depot two miles across town to the site of the former MoPac station--an arrangement necessitated by the SP's refusal to allow the new train to enter their depot on East Commerce Street.

Altho no outward signs of preparation for the new service, such as construction or employment of additional personnel, were visible, indications were that something would be rolling by January 20. But then on January 16 the new train was again off.

(continued on page 14)

First Day of Operation - BART Oakland-Richmond Line

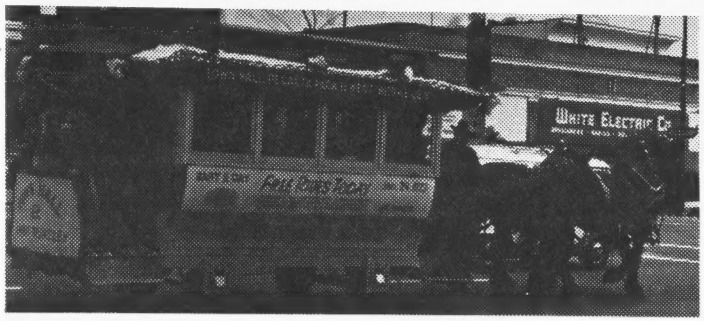


January 29 dawned cloudy and showery in the Bay Area, but the weather did not dampen the enthusiasm of thousands of riders who turned out to try the new BART Richmond line, 10.5 miles from MacArthur Station in Oakland, thru 3 Berkeley stations, 2 El Cerrito stops, to the terminus in Richmond adjoining the SP mainline. About 10am the first official train, carrying dignitaries from Richmond, headed south, and 35 minutes later the line was formally opened to revenue riders. In the photo above, the VIP train is about to swoop into the Berkeley subway after passing on the elevated section through Albany. Despite the long underground section, paid for by Berkeley taxpayers, the line is probably the most scenic segment of the BART system, which now totals about 39 miles. Sweeping panoramas of San Francisco and the bay, with "all three bridges" in view, can be had from the line north of Berkeley.

The line opening was considerably less frantic than the startup of the first segment last September. Many riders were already familiar with the system, and operation of the new line was so smooth and carefree that one might have guessed it had been running for many months.

AC Transit put many bus re-routings into effect Jan. 29, and for the first time there is a direct bus connection from the Oakland Amtrak depot to the BART system. The #88 AC Transit bus leaves from the Amtrak station, and for 25¢ carries passengers to the North Berkeley BART station for connections to Richmond or any point on BART.

For the January 29 opening, AC Transit resurrected an old horsecar last used in 1901,



and gave free rides along Berkeley's Shattuck Avenue (see photo at left.)

Photos by Message Media.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

ANNUAL CHRONOLOGY OF RAIL EVENTS

1972

JANUARY

1 New York City transit strike avoided at last minute
3 S.P. President Biaggini criticized Amtrak in U.S. News article
4 Last runs of the LAKE SHORE, leaving Cleveland without train service
5 Congressman Van Deerlin's SUNSET LIMITED trip ended 13 hours late
8 First Amtrak snow train from Los Angeles to Boise
Test runs of Turbo Train on Washington-Parkersburg route
10 Thru Seattle-San Diego service terminated; must now change in Los Angeles
16 Amtrak's fourth nationwide timetable took effect
Amtrak consolidated all tariffs into a single book
21 Amtrak's VP-Operations left Amtrak's employ in controversy
Heavy snows closed CN and CP lines in British Columbia
24 Controversial Wall Street Journal article in which Amtrak official claimed service is "lousy" and blamed the railroads
28 Last runs of the New London-New Haven, CT, "Clamdigger" RDC

FEBRUARY

1 Roger Lewis's letter to Wall Street Journal denying "lousy" service
4 First trip of Amtrak's Los Angeles-Las Vegas Fun Train
7 POTOMAC TURBO began 6-month trial period Washington-Parkersburg, WV
23 PUGET SOUND derailed at Tukwila, Washington
28 Roger Lewis interview in U.S. News answers Biaggini's criticisms

MARCH

10 One-day strike against S.P. by United Transportation Union
20 Three-day Pennsy Railroad Museum auction began
24 Life Magazine published full color article on Amtrak
30 Associated Press release "exposed" the POTOMAC TURBO

APRIL

1 Pacific Great Eastern renamed the British Columbia Railway
14 Amtrak announced coming daily operation of the COAST STARLIGHT and the discontinuance of the PUGET SOUND and the MOUNT RAINIER
16 Last run of the FLORIDA SPECIAL
17 Amtrak initiated free car rentals for travelers to Florida
18 Last SP automat cars sent to their resting place
27 Amtrak rescinded announcement of April 14 after pressure from legislators
30 Spring schedule changes; regional timetables issued; NIGHT OWL introduced

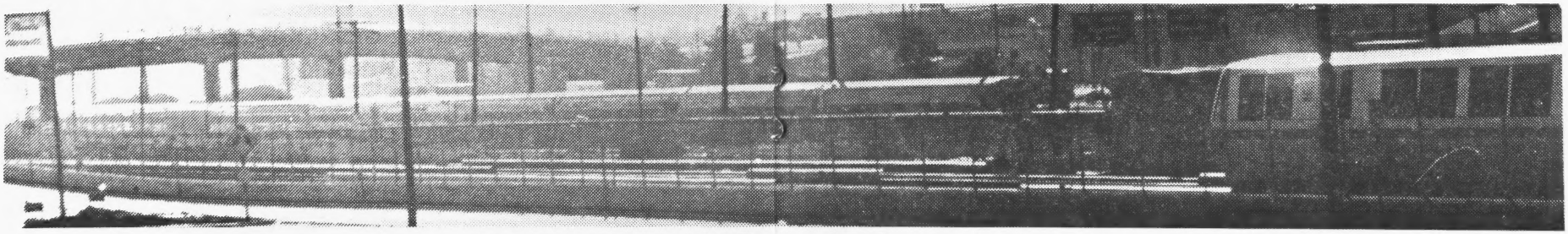
MAY

1 Amtrak first anniversary display at Washington, with all-refurbished BROADWAY LIMITED
NATIONAL LIMITED and BROADWAY LIMITED began operation as separate trains
2 First all-refurbished BROADWAY LIMITED ran to Chicago
Roger Lewis said he could not "sensibly commit" more money than that recommended by the Office of Management and Budget
4 Senator Lowell Weicker called for Roger Lewis's resignation
13 POTOMAC TURBO dropped in favor of a conventional train
15 NARP criticized the refurbishing of the BROADWAY LIMITED
17 NARP reported Metroliner agent shouting to crowd to "go take a bus"
27 Transpo 72 exhibition opened in Washington to run through June 4

JUNE

3 Senator McGovern's campaign train cars wrecked in San Joaquin Valley
9 Amtrak test train ran over proposed routes to Montreal
11 Summer nationwide timetable: CHIEF revived, CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO renamed the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and placed on daily schedule for summer; CAROLINA COAST added for summer
Amtrak equalized fare structure took effect
22 Disastrous Eastern floods from Hurricane Agnes began, snarling transportation

AMTRAK PLUS BART PLUS CAMERAMAN WAITING EQUALS AN UNUSUAL PHOTO



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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

ANNUAL CHRONOLOGY OF RAIL EVENTS

1972

JANUARY

1 New York City transit strike avoided at last minute
3 S.P. President Biaggini criticized Amtrak in U.S. News article
4 Last runs of the LAKE SHORE, leaving Cleveland without train service
5 Congressman Van Deerlin's SUNSET LIMITED trip ended 13 hours late
8 First Amtrak snow train from Los Angeles to Boise
Test runs of Turbo Train on Washington-Parkersburg route
10 Thru Seattle-San Diego service terminated; must now change in Los Angeles
16 Amtrak's fourth nationwide timetable took effect
Amtrak consolidated all tariffs into a single book
21 Amtrak's VP-Operations left Amtrak's employ in controversy
Heavy snows closed CN and CP lines in British Columbia
24 Controversial Wall Street Journal article in which Amtrak official claimed service is "lousy" and blamed the railroads
28 Last runs of the New London-New Haven, CT, "Clamdigger" RDC

FEBRUARY

1 Roger Lewis's letter to Wall Street Journal denying "lousy" service
4 First trip of Amtrak's Los Angeles-Las Vegas Fun Train
7 POTOMAC TURBO began 6-month trial period Washington-Parkersburg, WV
23 PUGET SOUND derailed at Tukwila, Washington
28 Roger Lewis interview in U.S. News answers Biaggini's criticisms

MARCH

10 One-day strike against S.P. by United Transportation Union
20 Three-day Pennsy Railroad Museum auction began
24 Life Magazine published full color article on Amtrak
30 Associated Press release "exposed" the POTOMAC TURBO

APRIL

1 Pacific Great Eastern renamed the British Columbia Railway
14 Amtrak announced coming daily operation of the COAST STARLIGHT and the discontinuance of the PUGET SOUND and the MOUNT RAINIER
16 Last run of the FLORIDA SPECIAL
17 Amtrak initiated free car rentals for travelers to Florida
18 Last SP automat cars sent to their resting place
27 Amtrak rescinded announcement of April 14 after pressure from legislators
30 Spring schedule changes; regional timetables issued; NIGHT OWL introduced

MAY

1 Amtrak first anniversary display at Washington, with all-refurbished BROADWAY LIMITED
NATIONAL LIMITED and BROADWAY LIMITED began operation as separate trains
2 First all-refurbished BROADWAY LIMITED ran to Chicago
Roger Lewis said he could not "sensibly commit" more money than that recommended by the Office of Management and Budget
4 Senator Lowell Weicker called for Roger Lewis's resignation
13 POTOMAC TURBO dropped in favor of a conventional train
15 NARP criticized the refurbishing of the BROADWAY LIMITED
17 NARP reported Metroliner agent shouting to crowd to "go take a bus"
27 Transpo 72 exhibition opened in Washington to run through June 4

JUNE

3 Senator McGovern's campaign train cars wrecked in San Joaquin Valley
9 Amtrak test train ran over proposed routes to Montreal
11 Summer nationwide timetable: CHIEF revived, CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO renamed the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and placed on daily schedule for summer; CAROLINA COAST added for summer
Amtrak equalized fare structure took effect
22 Disastrous Eastern floods from Hurricane Agnes began, snarling transportation

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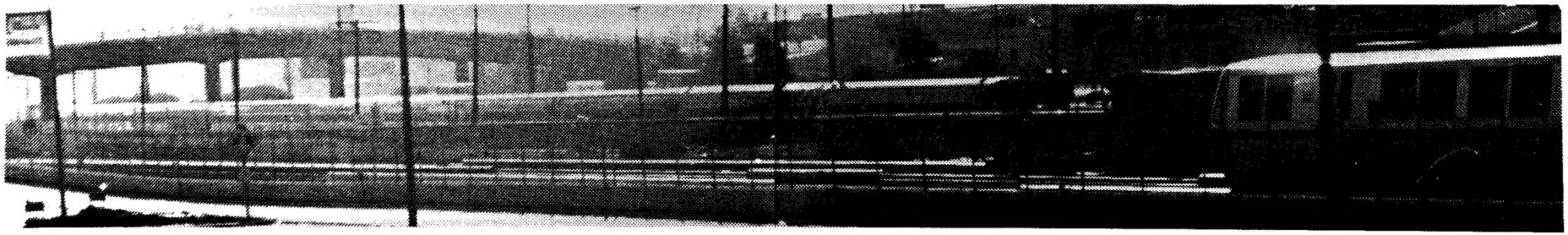

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23 Pres. Nixon signed bill giving Amtrak $225 million in grants, $100 million in loan guarantees, and $2 million to start up service to Canada and Mexico; Roger Lewis's salary cut in half
(Office of Management and Budget later held back $57 million of the $225 million)
26 Erie Lackawanna Railroad declared bankruptcy
28 Interstate Railway Act of 1972 introduced into the Senate

JULY

1 Connecting bus service from Los Angeles depot began operation
3 COAST DAYLIGHT cancelled due to freight wreck; SP refused to run alternate service
8 First refurbished dome lounge used on SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR
12 RF&P announced its refusal to run commuter service in Northern Virginia
15 SP Public Relations man criticized passenger trains in letter to L.A. Times
17 Seattle-Vancouver PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL began operation
18 Kansas and Oklahoma officials cracked down on liquor sales on Amtrak trains
24 Amtrak signed its first labor contract, with railway clerks
28 Amtrak authorized beginning work on nationwide reservation system

AUGUST

13 FLYING SCOTSMAN left San Francisco Bay Area to go into storage
17 State of Illinois called for high-speed Chicago-Rockford trains
19 SUPER CHIEF got new style menus
30 NARP revealed SP plan to oppose Amtrak auto-carrying train service

SEPTEMBER

4 SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR derailed near Inland, Nebraska
8 Court decided that Amtrak can serve liquor in Oklahoma
10 Amtrak regional timetables for fall; schedule to Vancouver shown first time
11 First portion of BART line opened
27 President Nixon rode on BART
29 First Amtrak train to Montreal

OCTOBER

2 BART train ran off end of track at Fremont, California
4 Louis Harris poll results for Amtrak released; favorable to passenger trains
5 House rejected use of Highway Trust Fund money for transit
Torrential East Coast rains snarled transportation again
Mexican train wreck near Saltillo killed 209, injured 1198
26 NARP urged expansion of Northeast Corridor to include Richmond, VA
28 Cincinnati Union Terminal closed after 39 years
29 Amtrak nationwide timetable, last one of year: FLORIDA SPECIAL replaced by SILVER METEOR; VACATIONER added
30 ICG commuter train wreck in Chicago killed 39, injured 200

NOVEMBER

1 Amtrak discount auto rental plan in West became effective
2 Amtrak ordered 40 new locomotives from General Motors
9 BART safety probe called for by California state legislative analyst
15 General Motors Special trains to West Virginia ran
16 Amtrak announced summer revenues were up 13.2% over 1971
30 Long Island Rail Road strike began

DECEMBER

1 Roger Lewis promised Chicago a Turbo Train
8 Amtrak banned cigar and pipe smoking in Metroclub cars after complaint by Chief Justice Warren Burger
10 PANAMA LIMITED derailed in Illinois
13 SILVER STAR derailed near South Hill, VA
14 COAST STARLIGHT began daily operation for winter season
15 Regional timetables for winter season in effect
28 Amtrak said it will buy 2 Canadian Turbos and lease 2 French Turbos for Chicago-Milwaukee and Chicago-St. Louis routes

Looking back over the year behind us, one is struck by the fast pace of events and by the seemingly sudden changes in fortune of rail travel in America.

The year began on a note of conflict and criticism, while Amtrak awaited the passage through Congress of its money appropriations bill. There were Biaggini and other railroad people insisting that passenger trains would never make it and people just wouldn't ride them. There were people inside Amtrak being critical that the corporation wasn't moving quickly and energetically enough--and getting fired for saying so. There was Congressman Van Deerlin and other legislators irritated that the same problems found under railroad operation were still occurring under Amtrak, and wishing Amtrak would do miracles with the pittance and the short time it had been given. There was Roger Lewis trying to hold things together, to proceed in a deliberate manner and maintain good relations with the railroads.

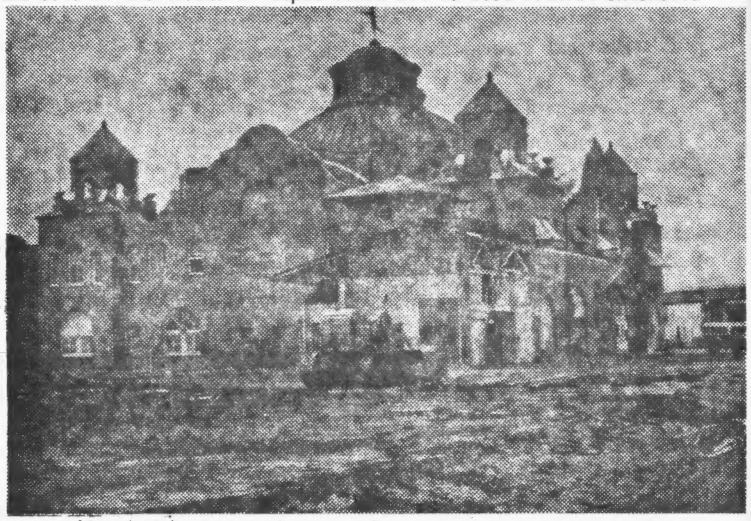
Things flared up again around the time of Amtrak's first anniversary. The big bone of contention was that the Office of Management and Budget had reduced Amtrak's appropriation, and Amtrak had meekly gone along with it, with Roger Lewis unfortunately telling the press that Amtrak couldn't "sensibly commit" more money than OMB prescribed anyway. That remark infuriated legislators who wanted to double or triple Amtrak's money to get things moving, and harsh words were soon flying on Capitol Hill.

But Amtrak rode out the criticism and went along with the money that OMB decided it should have. As the summer began, bigger changes began to occur in rail travel. Amtrak was in a race to get refurbished equipment on the road before the heavy travel season, and was pressed to delay its refurbishing and put all the cars it could muster into service. The summer was plagued with equipment problems, but people kept riding, and calling ticket offices in such numbers that they could not be handled, and we'll never know how many thousands lost out on planned train trips. But it was clear that people were coming back to the trains in droves. Amtrak was able to announce that in the first quarter of the year it had reversed the long-term downhill trend in ridership, and had found revenues 8% higher than projected. It could be seen that Amtrak was gradually getting a grip on things, and for the rest of the year all the figures were stunning. Everybody seemed to love trains--except for the White House that would rather not spend money to unlatch a Pandora's Box of rail travel.

(continued from page 8)

An AP dispatch from Washington, entitled "U.S. Derails Amtrak," quoted Amtrak officials as saying that reports of passenger service thru Texas to the Mexican border were "untrue," and that Amtrak had never announced any such service to be in operation by January 19. "A number of alternatives are still to be studied," an Amtrak official was quoted as saying, and start of the new service was announced to be off for at least another three weeks.

On January 17, however, the San Antonio Express carried an official announcement by one of the city's congressmen that a new thrice-weekly service between Fort Worth and Laredo would definitely commence operation on January 27. Direct connections with the AZTEC EAGLE would be available in Laredo, but travelers coming from or going to points north of Fort Worth would have to stay overnight in that city. The report also mentioned that it was not clear where in San Antonio passengers would be loaded, since the site of the former MP depot could not be used without extensive



An Amtrak-proofed station: the former Missouri Pacific station in San Antonio, as seen in February, 1972, just as the bulldozer had ripped out the last remnant of blacktopping after the platforms and everything else had been removed.

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Planning for the new service had somewhat the appearance of a comedy of errors--at least judging by the reports in the press. The original Amtrak legislation of last summer for $227 million in additional grants contained two million dollars for three international routes. The two Texas congressmen responsible for the inclusion of the route to Mexico, Jake Pickle of Austin and Henry B. Gonzalez of San Antonio, were optimistic that this new service would be in operation by late fall, the only obstacles being the route between Temple and Taylor (i.e., 39 miles south on MKT to Taylor, or 34 miles on ATSF to Milano and then 35 miles west on MP) and the need to provide for customs inspection at the border, which Congressman Gonzalez hoped could be made on board. Both the San Antonio Express and the News reported on September 26 that Amtrak's David Watts had just returned from Mexico and had ex-

pressed some concern about the lack of station facilities in Laredo. Nothing was mentioned about the facilities in the Alamo City.

Then on October 10, two days after the decision, the News reported that Amtrak's board of directors had formally approved service thru San Antonio, the new route being contingent upon receipt of $57 million in new grants (the remainder of the original $227 million that had survived the conference committee). Amtrak's Director of Information, Jim Bryant, was quoted that contrary to earlier plans and announcements, the new train would be a separate train from St. Louis thru Little Rock and Dallas to Laredo.

Dallas--from the news media to the City-County Amtrak Committee--was overjoyed at this news, especially since the city was acquiring Union Station for $5.4 million, the facility to be converted into a multi-modal transportation center.

That something was amiss with the new train became slowly apparent in late fall, especially since no preparations were visible anywhere along the route. On November 26 the Dallas Times Herald announced that the start of the new St. Louis train would be delayed into January because of problems with track facilities northeast of Dallas, the lack of stations in Little Rock, San Antonio and Laredo, and the problem of taking cars across the border. Dallas was reportedly almost ready to consummate the purchase of Union Station, and the use of Cotton Belt from Texarkana to Greenville, and of Katy from there to Dallas and Temple, was all but certain.

The new problem was further defined by the Morning News of November 29. Amtrak reportedly was faced with two great difficulties--first, "hostility" on the part of Cotton Belt (an SP subsidiary) for use of their line into Greenville, and secondly the poor condition of 36 miles of MKT track between Waxahachie and Hillsboro, two towns on the secondary Katy line from Dallas south towards Waco. Amtrak clained it would cost two million dollars to fix the track, whereas the Dallas Amtrak Committee insisted that the work could be done for about $200,000. One alternative considered by Amtrak was the use of Texas & Pacific tracks from Texarkana south into Marshall, then due west into Dallas and Fort Worth, and from there south on ATSF into Milano, a route about 100 miles farther than the Cotton Belt-Katy line. The major obstacle was of course the Cotton Belt's refusal to let Amtrak use their line to Greenville.

Dallas officials' uneasiness over the roundabout route that Amtrak might choose into the city was abruptly ended on December 14 when the Amtrak board voted to forego Dallas completely and run the train over the sparsely populated route of the old TEXAS EAGLE. Dallas was first stunned and then outraged. Major blame was placed on the three railroad presidents on the board who had combined with two other lukewarm supporters of Amtrak to "sabotage" the new train. Blame was also placed on the congressional delegation from the Dallas region who had purportedly shown little interest--an allegation vehemently denied by at least one congressman. On December 20 a delegation from Dallas, led by the city's mayor, met with Roger Lewis for a "frank and candid discussion," but apparently without immediate tangible results. Amtrak's president was quoted by an AP dispatch of December 21 as saying that the route thru Dallas was simply too expensive: "As of now we can't do it."

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#21		#22
Tu, Th, Sa		
6:00 am	Fort Worth	8:50 pm
8:15 am	Temple	6:20 pm
10:50 am	Austin	3:37 pm
12:55 pm	Dep. San Antonio	1:20 pm
5:05 pm	Laredo	9:30 am
		Su, We, Fr

With the arrival of the TEXAS CHIEF in Fort Worth at 11:55 am, the southbound traveler must wait almost 18 hours for a connection. Northbound the layover is almost 23 hours, with the CHIEF arriving at 5:55 pm the next day. Amtrak wishes you a pleasant journey!

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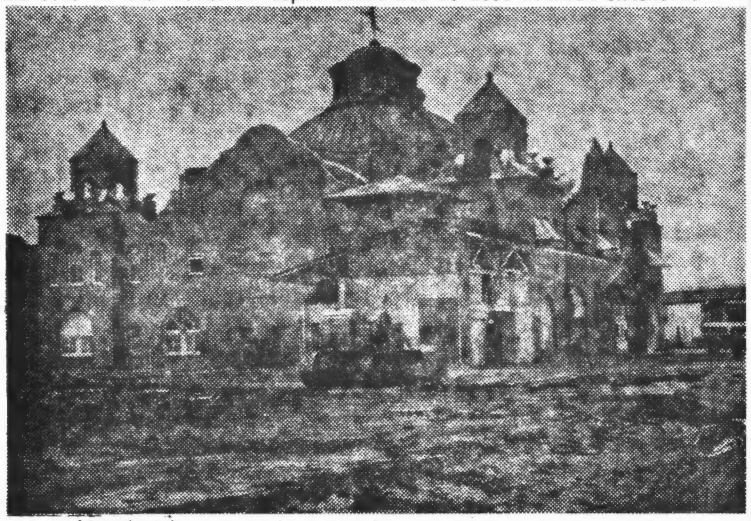

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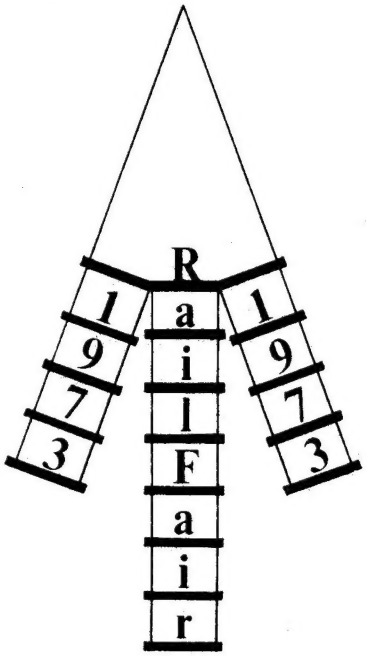
TWENTIETH CENTURY RAILROAD CLUB

proudly announces



"RailFair: 1973" will be a fascinating mini-convention for railfans to be held March 17 and 18 at the La Salle, the luxurious hotel in the heart of Chicago's central business district.

The TWENTIETH CENTURY RAILROAD CLUB promises an interesting and entertaining weekend of railroad fun, including:

--The Second Annual Railfan Luncheon
(tickets also sold separately for luncheon)
--"Twentieth Century" at the Goodman Theatre
--Great AMTRAK trip with breakfast in the diner
--ICG Hazelcrest Shop Tour
--All transportation during convention
--Plus parties and much more

Reservations are very limited due to the size of the group we can have at "RailFair: 1973", so if the idea of a great weekend of railfan fun interests you, hurry and send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: TWENTIETH CENTURY RAILROAD CLUB, 10700 South Seeley Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60643.

See you there!

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"I think the transcontinentals we've got are all good and have good potential. I'd rather not speculate on what might happen July 1, but I could comment that contrary to popular opinion our worst routes are not our transcontinentals. We're packing 'em in on every one of those services."

--Roger Lewis interviewed in Railway Age, Jan. 8

"Urban mass transit may be a key to urban survival, and federal support for it through highway trust fund revenues is a fair and feasible approach. The Senate has shown that it agrees; the House may still be a question mark. That is why it is particularly important for the Administration to put its weight solidly behind the effort. The obvious choice to speak for the Administration is Secretary-designate Brinegar. We hope that he will familiarize himself with the issue quickly, and that he will give it the degree of commitment it deserves."

--Los Angeles Times editorial, Jan. 12

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"He said (BART) passengers will be taken close to the wooden hills of Albany and El Cerrito and will have a sweeping view of San Francisco Bay, San Francisco skyline and the Golden Gate."

--Oakland (CA) Tribune, Jan. 29

(And look for a lot of wooded houses too.)

Urban-Suburban Transit

MONEY FOR MASS TRANSIT IN NEW NIXON BUDGET

$1.8 billion of the budget released by the White House Jan. 29 is designated to go for urban transportation: $1 billion for mass transit and $800 million for highways. The funding power of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration will be increased to $872 million for Fiscal 1974, compared with $863.7 million in the present fiscal year. This money from UMTA will help to buy 275 rapid transit cars, 215 commuter cars, and 5,000 new buses.

In other news, President Nixon has named Frank C. Herringer to replace Carlos C. Villareal as head of UMTA. The Senate has approved Nixon's choice of Claude Brinegar as Secretary of Transportation.

TRANSIT NEWS BRIEFS:

A 90-day truce went into effect on the Long Island Rail Road, with commuter service returning Jan. 20. It is believed that the 7-week strike will result in the loss of some regular commuters on the road... Peking's subway is featured in a New York Times article of Jan. 28. The paper says the 4-year old subway costs only a nickel but has few patrons... Milwaukee Road is requesting a 10% commuter fare increase effective March 1... A bill to allow gas tax money to be used for mass transit and pollution abatement programs was introduced into the California Assembly late this month, and will be strongly supported by the Sierra Club... A new commuter bus service between Livermore, Pleasanton, Dublin and San Francisco-Oakland has been approved by the California State PUC...

You should see what the Alaska Railroad has been doing with its passenger trains! Last year the Alaska Railroad bought some thirty Union Pacific cars for use on its train, the AURORA, from Anchorage to Fairbanks. So far only a few coaches and the domes have been running in the train; however, there are also streamlined baggage cars, more coaches, a couple of lunch counter cars, and two lounges.

The paint scheme is quite nice, with the Union Pacific yellow being left on with a foot-wide blue stripe on the letterboard and one on the bottom where the red stripe was.

The usual consist of the AURORA during the summer of 1972 was two baggage cars, two coaches, a diner, a former UP coach, and two domes also from the UP. The other cars were all heavyweight cars converted from World War II hospital cars.

Unfortunately, this Federally-operated train may be in trouble. Last year the new Anchorage to Fairbanks highway was completed, and of course traffic fell off on the train, which runs on the schedule of an accommodation local, stopping almost anywhere, and is hardly any competition for speedier buses on the new highway. There is talk of dropping the flagstops and speeding up the schedule next year, but this train needs more publicity, especially in the lower 48 states where the tourists come from who ride this train during the summer.

Any effort to spread the word about this train would be a great help and just might save it. I rode this train last summer, and it was a really nice ride!

--William Hutchison
APO, Seattle

LOOK OUT FOR THE CARS INDEED. The old crossing sign at Delaware Street in Berkeley reads "Look out for the cars" as the COAST STARLIGHT, running daily for the Christmas season, whizzes by with a long string of them. Santa Fe and Amtrak coaches are cars nearest camera. Train was 1hr 45min late when we photographed it last December 20.

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PASSENGER TRAIN JOURNAL

With Our Most Important Issue:

The Winter '72-'73

"RAIL CRISIS ISSUE"

1973 may well be the most important date in the history of American intercity rail passenger service. This is the year in which, for better or worse, the future course of Amtrak will be decided.

PTJ, an advocate of expanded and improved rail service, will devote this issue to the problems we will face if even greater dependence on highways and airways is ordained; what other advanced nations are doing to rebuild and upgrade their rail systems, and why; what the US used to enjoy in the way of rail passenger service and what we could have if even a small fraction of funds going to other modes were used for rails. In short, we plan this to be a definitive work on the crisis facing America.

This issue will be off the press in mid-February. It may well become a collector's item.

PTJ is the only full-size US publication devoted exclusively to modern rail passenger service. It is published quarterly.

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